

## RUBY GRAVES JOURNAL

(The following typewritten account was found in the papers of Ruby Graves of Surplus St., who recently died at the age of 100. -- Ed.)

John Alden, Capt. Standish, Jonathan Brewster, Thomas Prence. These are names of the first settlers of Duxbury, who signed an agreement to remove their families to Plymouth in the winter time, "that they might better repair to the worship of god." This plan did not continue long, however, for in 1632 a church was organized, and in 1637, the year of the Town's corporation, Rev. Ralph Partridge was chosen as the first pastor.

The location of the first meeting house is unknown. It was probably in the southeastern part

of the town.

The early preachers were also the teachers, and they sometimes fitted young men for college. In 1714, a half acre of land was offered to the town by Benjamin Chandler, on which a schoolhouse might be set, "to remain so long as the town pleased." This building was doubtless the first schoolhouse of Duxbury. It's location is unknown.

In 1741 the town was divided into four school districts, and two schoolmasters were employed to teach one half the year, one at the north and one at the south end of the town. The wages varied from twelve shillings a week to fourteen dollars a month.

The first physician of Duxbury

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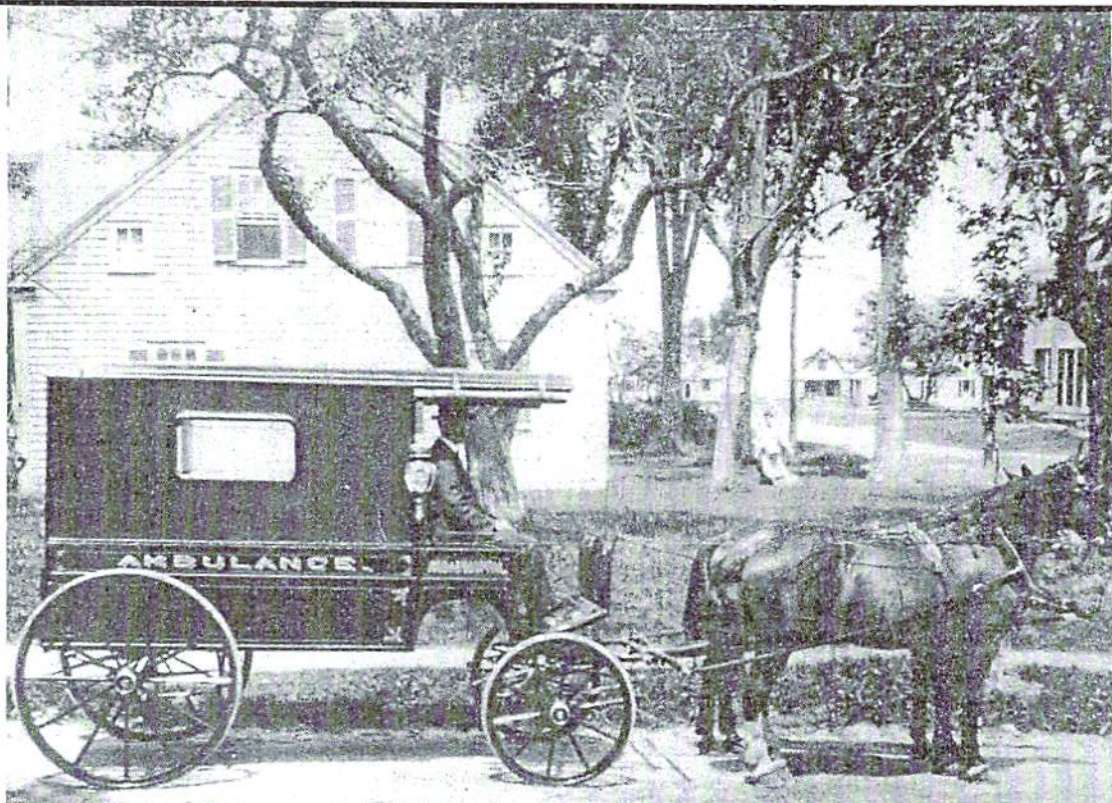
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was Dr. Comfort Starr. He practised medicine in the town about 1633. At that date the population was probably about four hundred, not including the Indians, of whom several families were living in Millbrook as late as 1698.

The second physician is thought to have been Dr. Samuel Seabury. He was a man of considerable ability, having been appointed Town Treasurer, and serving in other offices. He was an owner of slaves, two of whom are mentioned in his will, to be disposed of with other property.

Among the early institutions of Duxbury were the stocks and whipping posts. In 1637 the town was given time to provide itself with these important aids to the punishment of offenders, and as late as 1753 it is recorded that a citizen was paid ten shillings for building stocks. It is not known where they stood, but, as was customary in those days, they were probably placed near the meeting house, in order, perhaps, that Law and Gospel might work side by side for the good of the community.

The Gurnet Point, now owned by Plymouth, was formerly a part of Duxbury. The first lighthouse was built in 1768. It was burned in 1801 and the present light replaced in 1803. The Gurnet Point has a special interest because it is believed to be the



Horse-drawn ambulance shown in front of house on Washington St., possibly the James Frame house on the corner of Water St.

place discovered by the Northerners in their voyages along the coast in the 11th century and called by them "Krossaness."

Up to 1634 there had been no highways in Duxbury, the various parts of the town being reached by paths. There was little driving for pleasure, and as late as 1789

there were but sixteen carriages in Duxbury.

In 1768 Major Alden was given liberty to place a gate at the highway going into Powder Point if he would allow a cartway into the Point across his farm. This road, now Alden St., was the only way for teams from the Village into Powder Point.

Fourth of July the townspeople were invited to a grand celebration of the event. A temporary arch was erected over the bridge, on the top of which was set a large spread eagle carved from wood by Dr. Rufus Hathaway. The two military companies of the town paraded, and after escorting a

subject. The following letter written one hundred and forty-three years ago by a Duxbury captain to his wife at home informs us of his belief of their actuality.

The letter was addressed to Duxbury, "to be left at the Boston Post Office for the Plymouth Stage" and was undoubtedly sent in one of the mail bags left hanging on the Tree of Knowledge at Tarkiln Corner, West Duxbury, as the stage passed on its regular trip.

Portland, August 3, 1793

Dear Companion:

I had expected to be at home before this time, but an unexpected cargo was waiting for me at Havana and this took me to Halifax. If there is nothing more in sight here I may be with you almost as soon as this letter reaches you. One night when we were passing nearest to Cape Cod I was looking over the rail to the westward in the moonlight when a Lady passenger came up behind me and said, "What are you dreaming about, Captain." and I pointed and said, "Over there lie my greatest treasures on earth." She asked me what I meant and I told her, "My wife and children in Duxbury." Do not think me too sentimental or homesick, but I shall be glad and pleased to see you all again.

On the twentieth of July last, being on my passage from the West Indies, in the morning,



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time as it discovered no inclination to molest us, myself and the whole crew observed it with the greatest attention, nor was its attention less fixed on us. The eyes were perfectly black, sharp and piercing. I was so near it as to observe clearly that there were no fins or external appendages to the body; but that its motion was by the writhing of the body, like other serpents. During the time it was with us several flocks of birds flew near which it eyed very narrowly. I observed in it the greatest agility and quickness of motion.

This seemed a voyage of adventure for us as we were within a day's sail of Havana. Ours was the good fortune to fall in with two boats of the crew of the brig New Hazard, wrecked on the Matuean reef the night before. They had just time to get their

boats out and jump into them as quick as possible, not being able to save even their clothing except what they had on. Unfortunately Captain Andrew in attempting to get into the boat from the vessel, fell overboard and every exertion to save him proved ineffectual. It was a fine vessel, bound from Havana to Batavia, and had on board forty thousand dollars in specie all of which was lost.

Please give my profoundest respects to our children and for your self accept the love of

Your affectionate husband,

Seen Again in 1817

It is interesting to know that in 1817, twenty-four years after this letter was written, Captain Obear of a Cape Ann fishing schooner saw a similar sea-monster off Newburyport so alarming the crew that they refused to enter that harbor, putting about and landing at Beverly instead.

Bluefish River, and foot passengers must wait until low tide to cross on stepping stones. In 1798 an attempt was made to have laid out what is now Washington St., the main thoroughfare of the town. This plan was strongly opposed at the town meetings by those in the upper part of the town, the chief objection being that a bridge must be built to cost at least \$3000, to connect the road with that going to the Point.

The plan was started by four of the town's most influential citizens, Seth Sprague, Ezra Weston (called King Caesar), Joshua Winsor and Samuel Delano, and they had practically the whole town against them. At last, in 1803, the town agreed to build the bridge, which was begun in April and finished on July 3rd. On the

gentlemen to the bridge, they formed a line on each side through which the procession passed, and then recrossing, they were escorted to Deacon Loring's hill on the south side of the river, where a collation was served and a most enjoyable day was spent. An account or chronicle of the erection of this bridge is still in existence. Its author is unknown. The honor (if there is any!) seems to rest between Major Judah Alden and Dr. Rufus Hathaway.

## Miss Graves Continues

(Here is another excerpt from the Ruby Graves scrapbook. -- Ed.)

Modern scientists tell us that sea serpents never existed but sailors of olden times would never agree with their opinions on that

island, distant nearly ten leagues. I suddenly got sight of a serpent of an enormous size, swimming on the surface of the ocean, its head elevated six or eight feet out of water, rather prone forward. That part of the body which was out of water, I judged to be about the size of a barrel in circumference, but the head larger, having some resemblance of a horse's. According to the most accurate computation which I made in my mind of his length, I think it could not be less than from fifty-five to sixty feet and perhaps longer. That part of the body which was not elevated but of which I had a distinct view several times, was larger than the part out of water.

## 200 Yards Away

I was within two hundred yards of it near an hour, during which  
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